REMARKS

Claims 1-8, 10, 11, 13-21 and 23-27 are pending in the present application. Claims 1-8, 10, 11, 21 and 23-27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a).

The Examiner has rejected Claims 1-8, 10, 11, 13-21 and 23-27under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,848,143 (Andrews et al.) in view of U.S. Patent 6,212, 178 (Beck et al.). In light of the amendments to the claims and the arguments made below, the applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

The applicant's invention as described in the claims is a communications system accessible over a data network, such as the Internet, which allows system users employing a personal computer and web-browser to communicate with service agents for a particular business or organization. Included as part of the system is a system user interface through which system users may connect over the Internet and view a number of options for establishing communications according to a selected mode. Once a mode is selected, the user will be connected to an agent through the selected mode. Also included are various displays presentable to a service agent, one of which allows the service agent to manually select a particular status which the system will then employ when routing incoming connections from system users. The system is further configured to compile information about the various service agents such that a current state of agent availability may be viewed as well as performance information for each agent. This information is presentable on a supervisor's display through which a party may view and/or edit agent profile information.

Andrews et al. discloses a communication system which automatically makes telephone routing decisions with "global authority" based upon information gathered in real time from the communication system. Included in Andrews et al. is a monitoring means which is configured to monitor the various elements of the system to determined whether these elements are functioning

properly. The system further adapted to generate control systems based upon status messages received from the agent systems, requested service data from the network and optimization parameters.

The applicant has amended Claims 1 and 15 to now clearly recite that a supervisor interface is also employable to communicate with the agent status module so that agent status and agent profile information may be reviewed and agent profile information edited. Support for such an interface is found in Figs. 9 and 10, as well as on Page 22 Lines 2-27.

Neither Andrews et al. or Beck et al., alone or in combination, teach or suggest the Applicant's invention because neither reference includes a description of the type of supervisor monitoring capability which is described in the Applicant's invention. Specifically, according to the claims as amended, various supervisor displays are provided through which a supervisor may view status information as to the status of agents, and/or agent profiles. Further, the display provides the capability for a supervisor to edit profile information for the various agents.

As was discussed above, Andrews et al. does disclose various monitoring functions, including the capability to generate various control signals based on status and other types of messages received (see Column 3 Lines 15-18). Further, there is discussion as to the provision of real time status messages from agent systems as well as the accessing of historical status messages from a database. What is not described in Andrews et al. is the composition of the status messages. This is an important distinction in that in the Applicant's invention the status information does not necessarily relate to the computer system resources being employed, but instead to providing information as to the identity and profiles of agents currently connected to the system and providing services. This, in conjunction with the provision of a supervisor display which allows supervisors to monitor employee activity as well as edit certain key pieces of information, provide a patentable

distinction to what is disclosed in Andrews et al. because it serves a completely different purpose. In Andrews et al. there is no teaching or suggestion that any of the status information could be accessed and viewed by system users, instead the generated status information is employable in a automated manner such that one computer system can make adjustments based on messages received from another computer system. In contrast, the Applicant's invention is not directed towards the management of computer resources but instead the management of human resources.

The Applicant's invention is also not taught or suggested by Beck et al. because this reference does not teach or suggest the types of monitoring functions described in the Applicant's invention. Beck et al. is directed towards the operations performed by a call answering system, but does not provide teachings or suggestions as to the various monitoring functions which may be performed. In particular, there is no teaching of the types of displays which are presentable to a supervisor wherein various agent activity may be monitored or agent information edited.

The combination of these references also did not teach or suggest the Applicant's invention because neither reference is directed towards the type of personnel management capability that are described in the Applicant's invention. In particular, neither reference teach or suggest the use of supervisor display so that agent monitoring functions may be performed by a supervisor as the agents carry on their business. As such the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) is respectfully traversed.

Based upon the foregoing, Applicants believe that all pending claims are in condition for allowance and such disposition is respectfully requested. In the event that a telephone conversation would further prosecution and/or expedite allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

MARSH FISCHMANN & BREYFOGLE LLP
Customer No. 25231

By: _____

Kenneth J. Johnson, Esq.
Registration No. 36,834
Marsh Fischmann & Breyfogle LLP
3151 South Vaughn Way, Suite 411
Aurora, Colorado 80014
Telephone: (303) 338-0997
Facsimile: (303) 338-1514

Date: October 24, 2002

REDLINED CLAIMS

1. A communications system comprising:

a user interface through which users may establish a connection with the system through use of a personal computer;

a agent interface through which agents may establish a connection with the system through a personal computer, wherein the agent interface includes a plurality of interactive buttons for manually indicating agent status;

a central processor which provides for establishing a line of communication between the users and the agents based on a mode of communication selected by the user, said central processor further including an agent status module which is configured to compile and present on an interface the agent status information for a plurality of the agents connected to the central processor;

a supervisor interface in communication with the agent status module through which at least one of may be performed: the agent status may be viewed, agent profile information may be viewed, and the agent profile information may be edited;

a user memory which includes personal information for the user that have established a line of communication, wherein the central processor retrieves the user information when a connection is detected, and said user information is presented to the agent with which a line of communication has been established; and

a queue within which connections to the user may be directed when a first predetermined condition is detected by the processor, and which may be connected with an agent when a second predetermined condition is met.

15. A method of providing communications computer users comprising the steps of:

detecting a connection established by at least one user through a user interface;

displaying a first interactive screen graphic to the at least one user, wherein the interactive display graphic includes selections as to a desired mode of communication and provides for entry of selected information;

based on the selected information entered, retrieving from a memory personal information relating to the at least one user;

presenting an interactive screen display to at least one of the agents through which status information for the at least one agent may be entered;

receiving change in status information from one of the agents, and changing the status of the agent accordingly

performing a search to determine if an agent is available to establish a connection with the at least one user;

if an agent is available, providing the personal information to the agent through a second screen display and establishing the connection between the user and the agent according to the mode of communication chosen by the at least one user;

if an agent is unavailable, placing the at least on user's connection in a queue until one of the agents becomes available, wherein a connection is established between the user and the agent according to the mode of communication chosen by the at least one user; and

compiling the agent status information and compiling for view in a supervisor's display, wherein the supervisor's display is further configurable to provide for at least one of: viewing and editing of agent profile information.